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### Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Original) A method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements, through the use of rule-based searches and block diagrams, the method comprising:  
  
selecting a first block from a block design of a system, where the block design comprises a plurality of blocks, each block representing a component or subsystem of the block design;  
  
submitting a search query to a database of objects for researching which component or subsystem to use for the first block;  
  
receiving an answer set from the database of objects that satisfies the search query, where the answer set comprises at least one object from the database of objects;  
  
assigning at least one candidate object from the answer set to the first block in the block design; and  
  
repeating the steps of selecting, submitting, receiving, and assigning for at least one other block in the block design.
2. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the step of assigning is automatic if the answer set contains exactly one object.
3. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the step of repeating is repeated for all remaining blocks in the block design.

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4. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the step of assigning comprises:  
  
associating a candidate object from the answer set to the first block in the block design; and  
  
updating the block design by replacing the first block with a representation of the candidate object.
5. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the database of objects comprises engineering designs and engineering components.
6. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the database of objects comprises technical papers.
7. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the database of objects comprises patent documents.
8. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 1, wherein the database of objects comprises software modules.
9. (Original) A method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements, through the use of rule-based searches and block diagrams comprising:

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selecting a first generic description from a system design, where the system design comprises a plurality of generic descriptions, each generic description representing a component or subsystem of the system design;

submitting a search query to a database of objects for researching which component or subsystem to use for the first generic description;

receiving an answer set from the database of objects that satisfies the search query, where the answer set comprises at least one object from the database of objects;

assigning at least one candidate object from the answer set to the first generic description in the system design; and

repeating the steps of selecting, submitting, receiving, and assigning for at least one other generic description in the system design.

10. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the step of assigning is automatic if the answer set contains exactly one object.
11. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the step of repeating is repeated for all remaining blocks in the block design.
12. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the step of assigning comprises:  
  
associating a candidate object from the answer set to the first block in the block design; and

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updating the block design by replacing the first block with a representation of the candidate object.

13. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the database of objects comprises engineering designs and engineering components.
14. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the database of objects comprises technical papers.
15. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the database of objects comprises patent documents.
16. (Original) The method for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements from claim 9, wherein the database of objects comprises software modules.
17. (Original) A rule-based refinement tool, for finding in a larger system, components or subsystems that meet a predefined set of requirements, through the use of rule-based searches and block diagrams, comprising:
  - a database of objects, wherein the objects are related to components or subsystems;
  - a search engine which accepts a search query and executes the search query against the database of objects to determine which components or subsystems can be used for a generic description portion of a system design, which returns an answer set of at least one candidate object; and

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an assignment processor for assigning at least one candidate object from the answer set to the generic description in the system design.

18. (Original) The rule-based refinement tool from claim 17, further comprising a drawing module which graphically presents the generic descriptions of the system design as a series of blocks interconnected to form a block diagram.
19. (Original) The rule-based refinement tool from claim 18, further wherein the assignment processor instructs the drawing module to graphically replace the generic description with the candidate object.

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